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General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

13th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 September 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Address by Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sánchez Cerén (*spoke in Spanish*): Given that today is the International Day of Peace, it is an honour to present a message of achievements and challenges from the Republic of El Salvador on the global agenda to General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I would like to express our solidarity and condolences to the people and the Government of Mexico, which have faced a devastating earthquake. We extend the same message of sympathy to the Caribbean countries and the United States, which have been affected by hurricanes.

El Salvador identifies with the central theme of this debate and agrees to follow up on such a vision for the fulfilment of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Agenda 2030 constitutes an important instrument for the dialogue and consensus-building processes in El Salvador. We have contributed our experiences to the discussion at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to which we submitted our first national voluntary review on the implementation of Agenda 2030.

El Salvador has a national agenda for sustainable development, which was developed through the creation of an institutional architecture for its implementation. We have allocated more than half of public spending to education, health and social protection in order to reduce extreme poverty and enhance social development. We have also increased the allocation of resources to programmes focused on poverty reduction.

In the area of education, which is a priority for our Government, we have made significant progress in eradicating illiteracy and increasing the availability of an inclusive education, while maintaining a high level of primary-education coverage over the past four years. Also noteworthy are our advances in food and nutritional security, through which we have reduced chronic child malnutrition. We promote family farming by supporting small producers, improving their incomes and ensuring food security through participatory and sustainable processes.

In order to address employment and opportunities we established the National Employment System, which

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benefits young people through programmes that bolster their capacities for work, and we are firmly committed to generating a favourable climate for foreign investment. Our duty as a society is to continue our efforts to build upon such positive outcomes and continue on the path to achieve Agenda 2030. It is important to point out that we have great challenges before us, especially in the fiscal area, where agreements are urgently needed if we are to achieve greater dynamism and economic development that goes hand in hand with social progress and benefits for the people.

Such sustainable development requires an environment of peace and security, and for that reason we have promoted a process of dialogue at the political and multisectoral levels. It was out of that process that we developed the Plan El Salvador Seguro. It has a comprehensive approach aimed at addressing the phenomenon of violence, emphasizes prevention and firmly respects human rights. Two years after we began to implement it, we have seen good results, such as reducing the homicide rate by 50 per cent and achieving a similar percentage with regard to extortion.

I must stress that without a financing strategy, adapting Agenda 2030 to national planning becomes a complex exercise. That is why I reiterate the pressing need to link Agenda 2030 to the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, which sets out more than 100 measures and practices aimed at generating investment that will drive sustainable development over the next 15 years.

In our case, we conceived a financing strategy that embraces all sources and calls for shared responsibilities with regard to achieving the SDGs at the national level. Against that backdrop, we recognize that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to eradicate poverty and inequality, presents a challenge for middle-income countries, such as El Salvador. For nations that are considered to fall in that category, it is imperative to eliminate measurements based solely on average income, or only on economic income, and that conceal economic, social and cultural inequalities. That is why we reaffirm the call to go beyond and move towards the implementation of a multidimensional calculation.

It is equally relevant to refer to sovereign debt, given its negative impacts on development. A restructuring mechanism that promotes a fair and shared distribution between debtors and creditors based on human needs is a priority. On the other hand, a crucial issue for El Salvador is the issue of migration. It is very important to bear in mind that in 2015, when we adopted Agenda 2030, we recognized the positive contribution of migrants on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

That is why my country promoted the inclusion of the migration issue in the SDGs, and we have prioritized it in our national agenda for sustainable development. We believe that achieving a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration presents a true opportunity, but also a challenge. It is an opportunity that will enable us to tackle the issue of migration from a standpoint that ensures human development and human rights, and a challenge that we must commit to addressing in order to eliminate stereotypes that stigmatize migration as a criminal act.

Today, as anti-migration policies and movements gather strength throughout the world, we most energetically condemn xenophobia directed against refugees and migrants. My country therefore believes that it is vital to acknowledge the positive contributions and participation of migrants in their destination societies and their positive effect on sustainable development. One example of that contribution is our temporary protected-status population in the United States, for whom we hope that such status will be extended.

We should facilitate conditions that seek to regulate immigration status and promote the rights of migrants, as well as their integration into the host country culture and labour market, and their health care, education and housing systems, and acknowledge the contribution that they make to the economies of their host societies. In line with that position, we have submitted an initiative to our Legislative Assembly to help regulate the migratory situation of nationals who come from neighbouring countries to El Salvador, mostly for work. In July 2017 we launched our national policy for the protection and development of Salvadoran migrants and their families as a tool aimed at strengthening the protection and promotion of the development of Salvadorans abroad and of their relatives at home, as well as the returning population.

In order to obtain a culture of peace at the global level, it is essential to recognize and give priority to dialogue and peaceful solutions to controversies. As a country that suffered internal armed conflict for over a decade and was able to find lasting solutions only through dialogue and negotiation, we know very

well how important peaceful means are for resolving disputes. In that context, we welcome the fresh efforts for dialogue between the opposition and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We congratulate the President of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina, on that important initiative.

Furthermore, I call for an end to the economic blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, so that we may begin a new chapter in our Caribbean history and look firmly ahead to the future. We hope for an advance in relations between those two neighbours and hope that other unilateral measures that hinder progress and the well-being of both peoples will be avoided.

My country firmly supports all initiatives that promote and strengthen the disarmament regime, arms regulation and the fight against organized crime and terrorism, and all efforts to achieve international security and world peace. I reiterate our concern in the face of the threat posed to humankind by the existence of weapons of nuclear destruction. The use or threat of use of such weapons is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international and humanitarian law.

In another area, we must adopt urgent measures to combat the negative effects of climate change, which continue to compromise economic development, natural resources and the well-being of countries such as El Salvador, which produces few greenhouse gases. It concerns us to see regression in the international consensus to fight the negative effects of climate change at the multilateral level.

I wish to end by highlighting that the peace agreements that we signed in 1992, which have now reached their twenty-fifth birthday, taught us that the best victories are those won through the hard work and will of all parties. In that vein, I express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for the support and solidarity that he has provided us with in the process of national dialogue that we are developing in El Salvador, which is now in its second stage towards reaching an agreement.

In that same spirit of joint work and cooperation, I call on Member States to unite in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, truly focusing on people, so that no one is left behind and all those living on this planet can do so in dignity and peace.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Union of the Comoros.

Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Assoumani (*spoke in French*): It is an honour to once again address the General Assembly. On this occasion, I would first like to join those who have spoken before me in this Hall to express the great compassion that the people and the Government of my country, the Union of the Comoros, feel for the people and the Government of the United States of America, the host country of the Assembly, in the aftermath of the hurricane that recently devastated Texas.

As an island State, I would also like to extend our greatest sympathy to the French Government and the peoples and islands of the Caribbean for both the heavy loss of life and the magnitude of material damage wrought by Hurricane Irma. Those repeated natural catastrophes are a resonating call to climate sceptics to remind them that now is the time for commitment and action if we wish to mitigate, as far as possible, the causes of such devastating threats linked to global warming.

I would also like to associate the voice of the Comoros with those who spoke earlier today to express our deepest condolences and full solidarity to the Government and the people of Mexico following the violent earthquake that recently struck the heart of Mexico, causing hundreds of deaths and disappearances, as well as tremendous damage.

Allow me to commend the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and to voice true optimism for success in our work under his leadership as a seasoned statesman. His predecessor, His Excellency Peter Thomson, also merits the admiration and gratitude of my delegation and all others for his remarkable energy in accomplishing his mission during the previous session.

To Secretary-General Guterres and to all Members of our prestigious institution, we reiterate our readiness to make our modest contribution towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the upholding of peace and security, for which the United Nations is constantly working with selflessness and devotion.

My country, the Union of the Comoros, on behalf of which I speak, appreciates the responsibility borne by the international community in the light of the gravity of the situation throughout the world and the concerns plaguing people in many countries. I would therefore like to voice our commitment to the United Nations and commend its efforts to tackle present-day challenges and threats to peace, stability and collective prosperity. I welcome the relevance of the theme selected for this seventy-second session, which enables us to highlight the increasingly evident link between the environment, peace and security.

Here, I would like to reiterate our tribute to the Governments of France and Morocco for the work accomplished at the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, encouraging each of our countries, particularly island States, to give utmost priority to everything that has to do with the survival of our planet.

The general theme of our discussion today focuses on people, the striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet, and it incorporates many issues that lie at the heart of the concerns of the international community. They include migration, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, sustainable development and United Nations reform. Speaking about the human being also implies a reference to human rights, including human dignity, which are an uppermost priority for our Organization. Global warming, migrations, conflicts, wars and terrorism are all challenges that all continents, and Africa in particular, are facing and require urgent responses.

Terrorism, which represents the absolute repudiation of the human being, has become a scourge that we condemn and that we must fight mercilessly on a global scale with all our strength. In that regard, I call for the rejection of the dangerous confusion and unfortunate association between the terms "terrorism" and "Islam". There is no Islamic terrorism, just as there is no Christian or Jewish terrorism. Terrorists belong to no faith. Terrorists are simply barbarians.

My country, the Union of the Comoros, which I have the honour to lead, is a country whose people are educated in the practices of a religion, Islam, which advocates love of one's neighbour, tolerance and respect for human dignity. Those principles fly in the face of the cowardly, barbaric acts committed by groups acting faithlessly and lawlessly. By no means can they be associated with our religion.

We vehemently condemn the atrocities targeting minorities and communities — yesterday, unfortunately, in Bosnia and Herzegovina against Muslims and today in Burma against the Rohingyas, as well as atrocities perpetrated against minorities throughout the world. The inhumane and savage nature of such attacks is a shock to our conscience as we see attempts at ethnic cleansing committed against the poorest segments of society. I dare hope that our Organization will be able to uphold the most basic rights of the oppressed, regardless of origin, race, gender and creed.

What priority do we attach to the human being in the face of such ghastly scenes where human rights are trampled upon on a daily basis? The international community must absolutely act to end such acts and punish the perpetrators, at the risk of losing credibility before the people whose eyes are riveted on our institution, which has the right, duty and ability to provide them with protection, dignity and well-being.

It is by guaranteeing peace, security and human rights that we can collectively promote the SDGs, especially for a decent existence, health for all, gender equality and education for new generations. Technological possibilities present immense potential for our young people. Goal 7 of the SDGs is geared to ensuring universal access to reliable, sustainable and modern energy services at an affordable cost. The lack of widespread access to electricity is a hindrance to sustainable growth, particularly in Africa.

In the Union of the Comoros, in one year, we managed to end the electricity shortages and constant load-shedding that had plagued our economy, our businesses and our homes, and to emerge from a protracted energy crisis. However, now that the emergency is over, we need to ensure that those results can be made long-term through a medium- and long-term energy policy and through the development of renewable energy with a low-carbon footprint. To succeed in that and achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we must rely on ourselves and our own resources above all. However, we need international solidarity, but also the solidarity of industrialists, bankers and international investors.

The Union of the Comoros has returned to political stability after witnessing three peaceful transfers of power at the highest State level over the past 15 years. Today, we are offering an incentive policy and support measures with a more attractive investment code.

My country, as a small island developing State, is subject to myriad risks. Nevertheless, my Government's determination to work for the well-being of our people has prompted us to set a goal of making the Union of the Comoros an emerging country by 2030. There is great optimism driving us forward, and we hope that indicators will soon attest to our progress towards that ambitious and lofty goal. The main thrusts of our Government converge on the achievement of that goal, which is underpinned by a national development strategy.

Furthermore, there is a great deal of work under way to endow my country in the near future with adequate resources in terms of energy, road, port and airport infrastructure, economic recovery and the establishment of a framework for consultations. That will bring the private and public sectors closer together and will afford opportunities for civil society and political parties to fully play their roles.

For that reason, at the initiative of the elders and leaders of our country, we have launched an inclusive dialogue among the various components and forces of the Comorian nation. There are plans to hold a national forum in December to take stock of our 42 years of independence. That is an inclusive, broadened national framework, one that includes all national life forces. Its mission is to assess the past, draw lessons from it and plan for a better future under better conditions.

I have therefore unreservedly embraced this participatory, inclusive and representative approach, and the debates will lead to conclusions on everything that will strengthen the peace, security, calm and stability of the country and determine its future by drawing lessons from the past. In order for that important event to come to the hoped-for historic conclusions for the benefit of our people, I ask for the partnership and support of the international community and international and regional institutions, to which I would like to reiterate here once again our gratitude and our most sincere thanks for their unfailing support, especially when the Comoros almost sank into chaos 20 years ago. It is with their invaluable assistance that the country has returned to the path of peace and stability.

The displacement of populations — in other words, migration — destabilizes both the countries of origin and the host countries. However, the Union of the Comoros refuses to allow the term "immigrants" to be applied to Comorians who visit the Island of Mayotte, which is an integral part of its territory, despite the fact that it unfortunately remains under French administration. Indeed, the thousands of my compatriots who die each year in their attempts to go to Mayotte, a part of their territory, is not an immigration issue. The question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte relates to territorial integrity. Forty-two years after my country acceded to its international sovereignty, and in the absence of a solution to the issue since 1975, that question continues not only to weaken stability but also to hinder the country's socioeconomic development.

I therefore welcome the continuation of the dialogue between my country and France in the quest for a just and equitable solution to the dispute over the Comorian Island of Mayotte, consistent with international law and respectful of the interests of each party. I pray to Allah, the Almighty that He will keep us alive so that next year from this same rostrum I will be able to share with the Assembly the positive and consensual results of that dialogue.

France is a permanent member of the Security Council. Its history links it to freedom, democracy, justice, respect for international law and the promotion of peace. It does not intend to divide or separate a people. Its interest, like ours, lies in a world of stability and a peaceful and prosperous Indian Ocean region looking towards a better future.

In the Near East and the Middle East, the international community must mobilize further to end the martyrdom of the thousands of children crushed

under bombs, the hunger imposed on populations, the use of chemical weapons, the chaos and the partition processes in countries at war. The international community must sanction the use of chemical weapons. We must act to ensure that hope is restored for the displaced and refugees and that the countries affected can recover their stability and territorial integrity.

With regard to the Middle East, the lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current status quo are fuelling insecurity and destabilization in the region. The solution to that conflict lies in stopping the unacceptable colonization of the Palestinian territories, the end of injustice and violence against the Palestinian populations and the global settlement of the conflict, which is more than a half century old, on the basis of the two-State solution, which will fulfil the Palestinian people's right to full sovereignty, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Beyond solidarity speeches, support for causes, the condemnation of attacks on friendly countries and peoples, the expressions of compassion for victims, and the calls for respect for the right of peoples, the sovereignty of States and the integrity of their territories, we must show greater commitment. In any case, the Union of the Comoros believes in the United Nations and its capacity to face today's challenges. We believe that such an Organization is possible. We believe that we are able to build such a United Nations together.

Before concluding my remarks, allow me to take the opportunity of the coming of the Islamic New Year 1439 to convey to the General Assembly my greetings and best wishes for peace, progress and prosperity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Union of the Comoros for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Remengesau: I would like first to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election to lead our work in the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I would also like to thank his Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson for his exceptional service during his recently completed term as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

At the outset, the people of Palau extend our deepest condolences to those who have had their lives devastated by the recent spate of hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes and other natural disasters across Asia and the Americas. We must not forget that many do not have the resources necessary to rebuild. The international community must work harder to ensure that they are not abandoned. Such record-breaking storms are a harbinger of worse to come on a hotter planet.

Palau, in the Pacific, has experienced at first hand the impact of climate extremes. For us, those super-storms are akin to ticking time bombs: no one knows when or where the next one will detonate, but we are keenly aware that they can wipe out years of progress in the span of hours.

The President's clear determination to focus future efforts on conflict prevention, peace, migration and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet is certainly timely and well attuned to the realities of our generation. In fact, his attention to those very different yet related issues demonstrates a clear understanding of the complex times in which we live and the need to connect the dots between the causes and the effects of the interrelated challenges that we face.

In this modern world, we must continue to expand our cooperation at every level — private, public, not-for-profit and political — within the context of a global network that establishes fair and transparent guidelines that prescribe how to act and react to those dynamic topics. The only body that can fill that essential void is the United Nations.

With respect to sustainable development, we recognized, in 2015, through the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, that a global rights-based regime was necessary in the context of a global partnership, if we are to successfully eradicate poverty, address universal inequalities and provide economic and social opportunities to all for the peoples of the world.

Through the creation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, we finally recognized that the oceans are a resource that belong to and serve all the peoples of the world and must be protected as such. By coming together and finally agreeing on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we established a global commitment to begin the process of reducing greenhouse gases to acceptable levels.

Yet even as we worked hard to respond to that global environmental crisis through joint actions, we have found other issues of security and peace taking the forefront in our international conversation. As the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) is pushed back from its strongholds in Syria and Iraq, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been firing missiles and detonating atomic and possibly hydrogen bombs, thereby threatening worldwide peace and harmony. At the same time, migrants throughout the world are forced to flee their countries to escape the ever-increasing levels of violence.

Those are issues that must be dealt with globally through strong multinational institutions and partnerships. If those efforts are to be successful within the framework of the United Nations, the United Nations must be strengthened so that all of its members can believe in the fairness and effectiveness of the overall international negotiation and dispute-resolution process. These are the issues that our global focus is centred upon: a decent life for all and a sustainable planet.

I believe that we can all agree that, in terms of peace and security, inclusive sustainable development frequently prevents conflicts and sustains peace. However, peace is not always achievable, and when that is the case, the United Nations must facilitate efforts to respond to aggression and violence. Palau therefore supports all efforts and United Nations resolutions aimed at bringing North Korea to the negotiating table. The threat posed to the innocent people of Guam is a threat to us in Palau and the entire region. Palau also reaffirms its support for international efforts to eradicate terrorist organizations, such as ISIS and Al-Qaida. We must also support the Secretary-General's efforts to revamp the United Nations architectures and procedures for peace and security development and management as a significant component of the overall reform of the Organization.

The Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) face a unique set of security and development challenges. However, the United Nations presence in the region is quite limited. In shepherding that process, I urge the Secretary-General to recall the guiding principle that was so successful in delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: leave no country behind.

Taking into account the recent actions by North Korea, we must take seriously the long-term need to ban nuclear weapons. A good place to start would be by acceding to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I must give credit to the leaders of my country, who, more than 30 years ago, recognized the threat of nuclear weapons and banned the use, testing and storage of nuclear weapons in Palau's Constitution. In their honour, I signed that Treaty yesterday.

If we are to find success in achieving our 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, we are going to have to face the hard reality that the costs are very significant. Success will require all available partnerships and the development of the necessary means of implementation in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action, known as the Samoa Pathway.

In the area of climate change, we must continue to work to achieve the full implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. I would like to congratulate my colleague from the Pacific His Excellency Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji on his imminent ascension to the presidency of the upcoming twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In order to strengthen his efforts, Palau is seeking the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for climate and security. The appointment of a Special Representative would significantly aid us in our preparations to confront that multifaceted challenge and would enhance United Nations reform proposals.

My country, although small, is very proud of its commitment to achieving our Global 2030 Agenda. To

help protect our oceans, we have established one of the largest protected areas in the world. Within that context, we emphasize our support for a new implementing agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We have also supported resolution WCC-2016-Res-050, entitled "Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation", adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in 2016, which promises to work towards designating and effectively setting aside at least 30 per cent of coastal States' national waters as marine protected areas by 2030. In addition, we have committed to addressing and taking action with regard to marine pollution in all its forms.

At the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, Palau also called on other countries to join it in becoming parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, an international treaty that will help stop the transfer of illegally caught fish and marine life through our ports. I would like to make the same appeal here today.

In our work to save our oceans, we welcome the appointment of His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji as the first Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Oceans, which promises to bring greater attention to one of our most urgent priorities. Palau extends its congratulations to its close friend from Fiji.

Those types of commitment require the strong support of a broad alliance of partners. Fortunately, my country has a long history of strong partnerships. The United States continues to support Palau in its development and movement towards economic independence. We have a shared history and over the decades have become close friends. We recognize the unique relationship that we share. In these difficult times, we support and participate in the efforts of the United States, on behalf of the world community, to combat terrorism, bring closure to the hostilities in Syria and reduce the nuclear threat emanating from North Korea. We also thank the United States for its ongoing support for our efforts to establish our national marine sanctuary. We look forward this year to completing our compact of free association agreement with the United States, which will reflect that close and special relationship.

Palau also would like to acknowledge the great friendship that it has with Japan and the very significant economic support that we have received from that country over the years. We continue to express our support for the expansion and reform of the Security Council and Japan's permanent membership on the Security Council. We wish to express our sincere thanks for the Nippon Foundation's generous support to enhance partnership and collaboration in our marine surveillance and enforcement efforts. We would also like to recognize the very broad list of partners across the world who make our efforts to achieve a sustainable future possible, including the Republic of China on Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Monaco, Italy, the Netherlands, the European Union, private organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, among many others.

At the end of the day, our success will depend upon the development and maintenance of genuine and durable partnerships at every level of society. The issues that we face are becoming increasingly severe, dangerous and global in scope. They cannot be dealt with at the national or regional level alone. At no time in the history of my country or, indeed, the history of the world has the need for a strong global partnership of countries, organizations and people, through a single binding assembly of nations been more important. The United Nations has the potential to reconcile our global issues if — and only if — its Members are willing to recognize those issues and take the necessary action to develop and implement appropriate solutions.

My small country — despite its size — is willing to act in concert with the other nations of this great Organization to achieve a better life for our children, grandchildren and all future generations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Palau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*spoke in Spanish*): Although we currently live in a world of unrest and insecurity that is being scourged by an unprecedented global economic crisis, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is participating rather optimistically in the political and diplomatic open debates on the items on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We believe that the topics selected for debate encapsulate the concern of every nation to achieve the objectives that were proposed in San Francisco in 1945, so that we can achieve a world of peace, well-being and security for humankind.

We wish to congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We believe that his wealth of political and diplomatic experience, that of his Government and the experience of the other members of the Bureau will help to guide our fruitful discussions to build a better world.

We also hope that the work of this session will continue on from the previous session's endeavours, during which, under the guidance of His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, the United Nations made a correct assessment of the current state of global affairs. That further fuels our optimism that we can arrive at definitive and sustainable solutions for the complex problems affecting our planet. In that joint endeavour, the work of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, has been highly praiseworthy, which is evident from the selection of issues before us.

It should be recalled once again that Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations enshrines the intent of its Member States to build a world of peace and well-being for humanity by encouraging friendly relations and mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of every nation. No Member State should consider itself exempt from that duty. We believe that all the Governments of the world, if one is politically honest, are working for the welfare of their nations, which is why every country designs programmes to promote human rights, the democratization of society and socioeconomic development, thus ensuring the well-being of their populations.

However, despite our optimism in this debate, we express our deep concern about the numerous armed conflicts and the sociopolitical instability that are ruining the socioeconomic structure of States, precisely because of interventions in the internal affairs of other States, which is specifically condemned by the Charter of the United Nations.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is greatly concerned, because major wars that have destroyed entire nations have had Member States as powerful participating actors. Such States believe that armed force is the only way to bring about peace and resolve conflicts, while forgetting that war can never do that. Rather, it compounds and perpetuates conflicts, leading to disorder, destruction, desolation and ruin. Military force should never be the recourse used by the United Nations to ensure international peace and security. The Assembly must remember that international peace and security can be ensured only when every country enjoys internal peace and each country's fundamental and inalienable rights are respected.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is fully aware of and grateful for the support and confidence of almost all Member States regarding its candidacy as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We wish to convey here our total rejection of the use of force as the only recourse available to the United Nations.

We are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We condemn not only the use and manufacture of such weapons in conflicts between States, but also their possession and distribution. We believe that the terms of that Treaty are still insufficient — they should include the destruction of nuclear weapons, wherever they may be. Their possession by some States makes other States believe they have the right to possess them as well.

As a member of the Security Council, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea will cooperate with all States to ensure peace in the world, which should mean ensuring peace in each country and protecting its political, economic, social and cultural rights.

There is also a great deal of uncertainty about the fact that, despite the commendable initiatives in the 1990s

to combat malnutrition, hunger, climate change and others, and despite the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals held in 2010, after more than 20 years not much progress has been seen in those areas. On the contrary, there has been an increase in the number of people in the world who go hungry; the environment continues to deteriorate, causing major disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis and the deaths of thousands of human beings and the destruction of the infrastructure needed for human existence. The United Nations is still very far from achieving the established goals for the well-being of humankind.

We take this opportunity to express the condolences and solidarity of the people and the Government of Equatorial Guinea to the nations suffering from disasters: Mexico, the United States, the countries of the Caribbean and Sierra Leone, in Africa.

At the same time that we see those factors, we are also witnessing international terrorism, extremism, xenophobia, human trafficking, emigration, piracy, the phenomenon of mercenaries, major epidemics, transborder crimes and an acute economic crisis that is currently affecting the entire world. All of those phenomena make it necessary to achieve greater awareness among nations of the need to establish more direct cooperation among States and for all nations to undertake united, dynamic and coordinated action.

No matter how powerful a country may be, such events mean that we must all pay attention, because no State is exempt from the responsibilities resulting from the overbearing actions taken by some States against others. We must therefore focus more on bringing about peace in the world and ensuring a healthy environment, eliminating nuclear weapons and combating terrorism and piracy, which affect all countries. No country should act as a policeman who imposes on others the principles of good governance, to which we all have committed ourselves anyway.

We want a world with a spirit that is equally participatory and egalitarian for women and men, and for nations large and small. We want a reform of the Security Council that enables the equitable participation of all continents and guarantees the rights of all nations. We want cooperation based on fairness. We want respect for the cultural principles and values that ensure the existence of every nation throughout the ages. The premise here is that, in the absence of wars and the adverse phenomena we have mentioned, the world could move towards sustainable development, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea has taken a giant step forward in its development, such that expectations for its economic emergence have been estimated to occur by 2020. Unfortunately, however, its strategy has had to be considerably modified because of the current economic crisis. That is what is currently being experienced in our country with regard to peace and development.

The threats to peace and stability that we have seen over recent years have been provoked from the outside, with attempts to occupy the country and acts of piracy and terrorism that have been aimed at destabilizing the peaceful and democratic system of the existing Government. They are attempts to disturb the peace and create riots for the benefit of fortune-hunting adventurers. That has resulted in unjust and gratuitous accusations against the leaders of our country and others in the subregion, disparaging the legitimacy of our national sovereignty, and even ignoring the decisions of international justice. All of that has been part of an attempt to confuse international public opinion about the reality of the progress achieved by Equatorial Guinea in order to justify, as always, an intention to impose so-called humanitarian intervention in our country.

In conclusion, we appeal for greater global consensus to fight the phenomena impeding the progress and well-being of humankind. A more inclusive and participatory consensus on the strategies of action of the United Nations and other international economic organizations is needed. The United Nations must lead us forward with the idea of a globalized world engaged in united action that does not condemn or punish, but rather helps the most needy to overcome the challenges of development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Carvalho (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour and joy for me to speak before the General Assembly for the first time as Head of State of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. The elections of 2016, which brought me to power, once again illustrated unequivocally the level of democracy in Sao Tome and Principe and the regular functioning of its institutions.

At the outset, allow me to take this opportunity to dedicate the first few words of my statement to His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajcák, whom I congratulate on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, and to whom I convey our full support for his mandate and wishes for his great success. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, for the manner in which he conducted the work of the General Assembly at its previous session, that is to say, judiciously, with enthusiasm and unselfishness, in an international context that has posed serious challenges to our Organization.

I also take this opportunity, before such a distinguished audience, to congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres on his outstanding election. I am convinced that his political stature will undoubtedly enable him to lead the United Nations and address the multiple global challenges involving the necessary reform of the Organization, including the Security Council, and efforts to promote peace, sustainable development and human rights.

Within the context of the complex global environment, the current challenges facing our peoples and countries are forcing us to delve deeper into the guiding spirit that undergirded the foundation of our Organization as the ultimate and global guarantor in the search for peaceful and lasting solutions that are consensual and valid under international laws, so that we might reach the desired goals of peace, security, stability and progress for all humankind. As such, we can take advantage of this unique opportunity to pursue our collective reflection aimed at strengthening the role of the Organization. To that end, it is therefore urgent to carry out essential reforms that correspond to the dynamics of today's globalized world — that is, to enable the various specialized agencies of the United Nations to act swiftly, effectively and in accordance with to a process that was intended to be inclusive of all nations, as mandated under the Charter of the United Nations, signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco.

On the other hand, we must strengthen our awareness of the need to implement mechanisms that allow for greater inclusion in decision-making and strategic planning, which are the guiding principles of international financial institutions, namely, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We firmly believe that that is the only way for the economies of the developing countries to integrate more swiftly into the global development process, whose benefits have not yet been fully reflected in our own countries, while allowing for the renewal and strengthening of the credibility of those institutions, which we consider to be of central importance to the functioning of the global financial system, and to support our economic growth efforts aimed at the social and human development of our populations.

The theme of this session of the General Assembly, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet", fits perfectly with the present reality in which we live and corresponds to the challenges we face in search of a better world. Therefore, because the primary focus of any national, regional or international policy is to prioritize people and their yearning for a better life, as well as the continuous improvement of the mechanisms needed to meet those goals, the effort to achieve world peace is urgent and encompasses fundamental values that, we are certain, we all stand for and strive to achieve. The serious conflicts that are troubling the world are of constant concern, and their harmful consequences — which

affect the well-being of humankind, the balance of relations among our nations and our economic, social and human development — must be firmly and uncategorically eschewed by us all.

In our view, the divisions that we are now seeing are the consequence of a lack of sincere, comprehensive and thoughtful dialogue among all parties. We cannot allow religious fanaticism, isolationism and populist rhetoric, which today are anachronisms — and I would even add selfish — to prevent us from accepting and living with others' differences or to continue to lead to such a degree of discord, thereby aggravating tensions and cutting short many lives, including those of our children, who, if they are well cared for, represent the real future of our planet.

In that regard, we call for dialogue that will stress the central mediating role of our Organization in order to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula.

It is also necessary to stop the proliferation of weapons in Syria, where people continue to live under the threat of bomb attacks that have destroyed the country and torn apart its social fabric while claiming many innocent lives. There is also a need to accelerate dialogue and the peace process in the Middle East, to which we once again make a firm appeal from this rostrum to find a peaceful and negotiated solution respecting the right of the Palestinian people to conduct their own destiny, thereby respecting the basic principles of the United Nations.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to find a solution at the negotiating table for the tensions in Ukraine, the issue of Western Sahara and our brother country, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, which we greet warmly, and express the wish that its institutions will soon be restored to their regular functions.

Although the recent ministerial meeting of the African initiative for peace and national reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which took place in the Gabonese Republic on 17 July, was a step in the right direction, we have followed with great concern the deterioration of the security situation there, with incalculable humanitarian consequences, sadly pointing to a situation of genocide. We therefore appeal for efforts to be made to avoid another humanitarian disaster in that African country.

We cannot but deplore the terrorist acts that unfortunately continue to claim so many lives throughout the world. The barbarity and disrespect for the precious good that is human life, committed through those indescribable, appalling and inhumane acts, warrant our firmest and vehement condemnation. In that regard, we underline the atrocities committed by Boko Haram, among others, in our neighbouring and sister country Nigeria, which destabilized the entire region and severely slowed the implementation of sustainable development policies. Furthermore, they have an undeniable echo in the deterioration of security in the Gulf of Guinea, where acts of maritime piracy and the illegal activities associated with it have plagued our region. The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, a State that is peaceful, democratic and open to dialogue, will always stand side by side with its regional and international partners in all initiatives seeking to eradicate that phenomenon from our societies.

If, as the theme of the session invokes, we truly want to create the conditions for people to lead decent lives, it is urgent to address the problem of migratory crises. Every day, we are confronted with the tragedies of thousands of people who, as they seek to escape conflicts and the miserable conditions that affect their countries, risk perishing on trips in precarious circumstances as they go in search of a better life. There should be no doubt that no one leaves their homeland or faces such dangers on a whim.

There is a civic, ethical and moral responsibility to welcome those people and provide them with the indispensable humanitarian assistance necessary, but also to create conditions conducive to mitigating the phenomenon in the countries of origin. That involves the adoption of concerted policies for the reception of refugees and the provision of support to countries of origin with a view to fostering an environment of peace and stability, so that they can provide the conditions necessary for their people to take part in the life projects they choose.

We also underline the important work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, under the co-chairmanship of Germany and Morocco, which began in January and will run until the end of 2018. This shared leadership has made contributions to the United Nations Global Compact for Migration, which, we are convinced, will lead to the much-desired policy of improved global migration to be adopted by the international community in 2018.

We also welcome the recent French initiative that brought together a European-Africa joint mini-summit, held in Paris in late August, that sought to find ways to overcome Africa's significant migratory flow to Europe, which has also transformed the Mediterranean Sea into a veritable cemetery.

I cannot fail to mention the Sustainable Development Goals, the priorities of which go directly to the core of what we have been expressing. If we achieve — as we believe it possible to do — the eradication of poverty and hunger, the promotion of social and economic development, the protection of the rights of all, gender equality, the empowerment of women, a reversal of climate change, access to quality services and the provision of special attention to vulnerable groups, then we will see a positive evolution in the living conditions within our nations. Let us therefore all work to that end.

In that regard, we highlight the efforts of the African Union, enshrined in the guidelines of the important and ambitious Agenda 2063. Its implementation and success will contribute greatly to making such objectives more easily reachable. It is without a doubt an inclusive document, based on the cultural specificities of each country, which consciously demand from our Governments a very clear commitment to its success.

However successful we may be in achieving the goals of peace, stability and progress on a world scale, none of it will make any sense if we do not know how to take care of our planet. Combating the phenomenon of climate change is perhaps the most complex objective requiring all humankind to participate. The success of this fight is perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave to future generations.

In that context, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is a historic, broad-based consensus on the challenges we face in that area and the financial and technological means to overcome them. However, the measures proposed have yet to be implemented. Every day we further postpone the issue, the more our planet suffers. Increasingly extreme weather events cause irreparable damage to our ecosystem and life on Earth. I therefore appeal, without prejudice, for the the members of the Assembly to demonstrate political boldness, in the understanding that each should contribute according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Sao Tome and Principe, a small island developing State, has spared no effort in that regard, and I want to assure those present of our firm commitment to being at the forefront of implementing climate-change mitigation measures. However, I note, along with many other speakers, that funding for such measures lacks the support of the international community. Cooperation agreements should be established with ambitious funding for climate issues and guarantees for the effective and efficient transfer of technology by the more developed countries.

As those present know, our economy is extremely vulnerable, as it depends on official development assistance to meet almost 90 per cent of its needs. In the context of international financial containment, it becomes necessary to consider and design alternative ways of addressing that complex situation. It was with that in mind that the current Government of Sao Tome and Principe decided to implement an ambitious agenda of transformation for the 2030 horizon. It is fundamentally aimed at changing the paradigm of growth and economic and social development policies, with a strategic focus on the private sector of our economy. The new strategic direction, as reflected in its guidelines, is in perfect harmony with the aspirations of both the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063. We believe in its success and have the necessary ambition, but we will not be able to achieve it without the strong support of our traditional partners and the international community.

In that regard, I would like to remind the Assembly that, based on the recognition of the One China principle, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe re-established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China late last year. We are certain that this decision will help to strengthen our strategic partnership, and we hope that China will accompany us on the difficult path to development that we have proposed with our transformation agenda 2030.

In addition, we support the development efforts of Cuba's friendly population and wish to reiterate our call for further efforts to normalize its relations with the United States of America so that it will act as soon as possible to lift the embargo that for decades has been an obstacle to Cuba's progress.

In an era of proliferating technological means at the disposal of humankind, our increasingly attentive and informed societies demand a renewed effort to accomplish the noble mission of our Organization. Let us therefore seek inspiration in its founding

principles, the quest for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, humanitarian support for all those in need, the promotion of inclusive and constructive dialogue, the protection of our ecosystem and the promotion and guarantee of human rights, which are vital for the harmonious development of our nations.

The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe will continue to fight for such ideals, joining forces and willpower for its materialization.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mugabe: I wish to congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I also thank his predecessor, Mr. Thomson, for his commitment to and efforts in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President could not have chosen a better or more relevant theme for this session, given the times that we are living in, for the pursuit and maintenance of peace and the promotion of development, in solidarity, lie at the core of the mission of the United Nations and its entire system. Since the signing of the Charter of the United Nations 72 years ago, and in subsequent conventions, resolutions and declarations adopted over the decades, Member States have sought to actualize the unquenchable human hope for peace, justice and progress.

However, the current global development agenda differs in significant ways from all of those that preceded it. It is ambitious, revolutionary, transformative and universal, and it encompasses every single facet of human life. For its success, the agenda demands a radical, unprecedented paradigm shift in every sphere of human life.

We cannot halt or reverse the continued destruction of our natural habitat or the rise in global atmospheric temperature without a change in contemporary production and consumption patterns. That has been confirmed by scientific evidence. We cannot halt or reverse the persistent, widening gap between the rich and the poor among our nations without deeper international cooperation and a genuine reform of the existing inequitable international system. The current system is inherently structured to enrich a few and impoverish the many. Therefore, it cannot deliver on a key aspiration, watchword and objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — that of leaving no one behind.

For us in Africa, the current antiquated system perpetuates a historic injustice — one that can never be justified today. The 2030 Agenda represents new wine, and we call for a new wineskin, lest we ruin the new wine. It is for that reason that I reiterate my country's unflinching support for the African Common Position on Security Council reform, commonly known as the Ezulwini Consensus.

The overwhelming majority of us have accepted that we need to reform the current system in order to improve, but not destroy it. Nonetheless, the negotiations and process intended to yield the accepted reforms are painstakingly slow. We are left to wonder, justifiably so, whether those who enjoy and sometimes abuse the power and privileges of the current set-up are sincere interlocutors in those discussions.

It is axiomatic that we harvest what we sow, yet by some strange logic we expect to reap peace when we invest and expend so much, in treasure and technology, in war. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military expenditure in 2016 amounted to approximately $1.6 trillion. In the same year, according to the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development, overseas development assistance amounted to approximately $142.6 billion. Those mega investments in ever more lethal weapons and more sophisticated war machinery have not resulted in greater peace or security. Instead, we have witnessed heart-rending suffering and misery and increased mass movements of people fleeing wars and armed conflicts. That trend should be halted for the benefit of humankind.

We believe that a different and better world is possible. In proposing and inviting us to focus on prevention, preventive diplomacy, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the Secretary-General is pointing us in that desirable direction. We must also seriously tackle the multifaceted and complex root causes of conflict, including enduring poverty and deprivation, unequal access to resources, the denial of the right to self-determination of peoples, and interference in the internal affairs of other States, among other causes.

The continued denial of the right to self-determination to the peoples of Western Sahara and Palestine, who are living under colonial and foreign occupation, is immoral and an urgent issue for those seeking peace and security in our time. The Security Council has assumed its responsibilities, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and adopted numerous resolutions. What remains is the enforcement and implementation of those resolutions.

We call on the Security Council to demonstrate its authority by ensuring the holding, without much further delay, of the independence referendum in Western Sahara. We expect the Security Council to work closely with the African Union — its proven partner for peace on the African continent — in that effort. The ever-deteriorating situation and continued suffering of the Palestinian people should spur the Security Council to renewed, time-framed efforts to bring about the two-State solution already defined in numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Development and peace are conjoined and cannot be separated. My country has embraced the 2030 Agenda as an integrated and comprehensive approach to address the myriad and complex national and global challenges, in solidarity and in cooperation with other stakeholders. Zimbabwe was honoured to be among some other 40-plus countries that participated in the voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum in July.

We were and still are pleased to share with other countries our experiences and to learn from others about their experiences in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. We recognize the need for beneficial partnerships, both within and outside our national borders. One of our key partners is the United Nations system, with which, I am happy to note, we work very closely. I wish in that regard to welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to ensure that the support of United Nations country teams will be guided by national priorities. That will ensure national ownership and leadership of development processes, as well as the sustainability of development projects and programmes. That is what we are experiencing in Zimbabwe.

My country is an unflinching advocate of respect for the sovereignty and independence of countries. We therefore strongly defend and respect the right of each country to take decisions in exercising its sovereign rights. We cannot, however, remain silent when those decisions impact or have the potential to negatively affect our own welfare. And to that end, may I say that some of us were embarrassed, if not frightened by what appeared to be the return of the biblical giant Goliath.

Are we experiencing the return of a Goliath in our midst that threatens the extinction of all countries? May I say to the United States President, Mr. Trump, that he please blow his trumpet in a musical way towards the values of unity, peace, cooperation, togetherness and dialogue, for which we have always stood and that are enshrined in our very sacred document, the Charter of the United Nations. Upon those values each nation, including the United States, can build its greatness. And it is the greatness in recognizing those values of unity, peace, cooperation, dialogue and togetherness that we would want to be guided by the United States, and not by the promise of our damnation. We shall always resist damnation, no matter whence it comes. We resisted it when it was in the form of imperialism as we fought for our own independence, our own culture and our own sovereignty, and to be masters of our own destiny. That is why we call ourselves free today. It is because the monster of imperialism was defeated by us. Bring us another monster, by whatever name, and it will suffer the same consequences.

Climate change is a present reality and so are its effects and impacts. Climate change is global. We

cannot remain silent when a major world economic Power, or any other State for that matter, decides to abandon the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as Mr. Trump's great United States has done. Let us work together. Climate change is a reality. It is vital that we all play our part, in keeping with the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to halt the inexorable march towards the destruction of that on which our own existence depends.

On behalf of my country, I want to express our condolences to Puerto Rico and to countries that have suffered afflictions. There are many in this part of the world. We say that we are very sorry and we appeal to the rest of us, who have not suffered similar afflictions, to assist those who have suffered in such a horrific manner. I ask anyone here to watch television today and tell me whether they know where Puerto Rico is geographically. It has been completely wiped out by a hurricane. We are very sorry.

As I conclude my remarks, it is worth reminding one another that the world today, by its very interconnectedness, demands more, not less, solidarity; more, not less, cooperation and dialogue; more, not less, multilateralism. We have brought more and more issues under the global agenda and within global discourse. That acknowledgement has found expression in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the Sustainable Development Goals. Our survival and progress calls for reinforced solidarity, partnerships and cooperation and for development in unity, cooperation and peace. That is a call to which we must all respond positively and actively. Zimbabwe is already doing so.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Kalla (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by wishing a happy new year to those who celebrate the Islamic New Year 1439 Hijri. May peace be upon us all.

I would also like to extend Indonesia's deep sympathy with and condolences to those affected by the recent natural disasters, including the earthquake in Mexico, the hurricanes in the Caribbean and parts of the United States, as well as floods in South Asia and other parts of the world. Our prayers go out to all the victims.

May I congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. Indonesia is committed to contributing to his successful presidency. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji for his able stewardship as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. We commend his role in driving a universal push for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are all represented on the same world map, yet we see many different worlds. Our world today is far from equitable. The peoples of our world experience war, hunger, extreme poverty and illiteracy. Peace and equal prosperity are far from being reached. Therefore, Indonesia welcomes the theme of this year's session, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". The theme recognizes the importance of placing the needs of our peoples first and highlights the fact that peace, prosperity, and sustainability are mutually reinforcing. In that context, I wish to underline three important points for achieving peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet.

First, it must be underlined that peace is never given; rather, it has to be developed and nurtured. We must work towards creating a global ecosystem of peace and stability. Indonesia's experience in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations shows that building such an ecosystem is fundamental. It is fundamental for economic development and fundamental for the prosperity of the people.

Indonesia firmly believes that developing a global ecosystem of peace and stability is doable. However, to succeed we must practice the habits of dialogue, inclusiveness, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force. More importantly, we must develop the United Nations as a robust global institution that emphasizes the maintenance of peace, security and stability. Key to that is ensuring that the United Nations reform process results in a strong, effective and relevant United Nations. It was for that reason that Indonesia co-sponsored the declaration of support for United Nations reform.

Furthermore, we must also strengthen international peacekeeping and peacebuilding mechanisms. Indonesia is honoured to have played a part in mediating conflicts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding beyond our borders. We have been and will always be ready to be a part of a global solution. Over the past 60 years, we have contributed more than 38,000 personnel to 28 United Nations peacekeeping operations. We currently deploy more than 2,700 peacekeepers in nine peacekeeping missions. We are also determined to contribute 4,000 personnel by 2019 and increase the number of female peacekeepers.

Beyond peacekeeping, Indonesia is an active member of the Peacebuilding Commission. We underline the need to ensure sustainable peace at the global level, which requires a global culture of prevention. It is also important to ensure a strong partnership among the United Nations, the relevant regional organizations and national Governments.

A global ecosystem of peace and stability requires the international community to settle one of the longest-standing unresolved conflicts — that of Palestine and Israel. This year marks half a century of the illegal occupation of Palestine. We shall not give up. Palestine is at the heart of Indonesian foreign policy, and Indonesia will continue to support it. After 50 years of stalemate, we need a fresh approach — one that is sustainable and innovative and can bring about a two-State solution.

We must not stop with the attainment of sustainable peace. A decent life for all people must be our global goal. That leads me to my second point. There must be synergies between sustaining peace and the development agenda. We must cultivate peace and stability to work for us in achieving sustainable development. The international system is well equipped to attain a decent life for all. A number of global commitments have been agreed, including the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, to name but two.

However, commitments must be translated into concrete actions. The key to that is the means of implementation for the least developed and developing countries. Adequate funding, technical assistance, capacity-building and the transfer of technology are important elements for success. It is also important to support regions with huge potential that have undertaken great reforms towards sustainable development.

Africa is one such region. For Indonesia, South-South and triangular cooperation is our way to support development in the least developed and developing countries. Over the past three years, we have organized 167 South-South and triangular cooperation programmes, from which more than 2,000 participants from the least developed and developing countries have benefited. Indonesia is also proud to host the first Indonesia-Africa Forum in April of 2018, which shows our commitment to strengthening a partnership with Africa towards achieving sustainable development.

Synergy between sustaining peace and the development agenda requires a society that is just and inclusive and fully respects human rights. There should be no more man-made humanitarian crises in the world. Indonesia shares the concern of the international community regarding the developments in Rakhine state. We have proposed a 4+1 formula to the Government of Myanmar, placing the needs and welfare of the people at its centre. It would first require restoring stability and security. Its second tenet is restraint and non-violence. Third is to provide protection to all people in Rakhine state. Fourth is immediate access to humanitarian assistance. We also wish to implement the recommendations of the team led by Kofi Annan.

That is why a people-centred Government must be at the heart of national development programmes. That is why Indonesia continues to strengthen democracy and good governance at all levels. Over the past 10 years, through the Bali Democracy Forum, Indonesia has also shared the experiences and best practices of its democracy, working to strengthen democracy in its wider region.

Furthermore, development must not be achieved at the expense of the environment. Despite the sceptics, climate change is real. It is happening as we speak. Like

many small island developing States, Indonesia, with more than 17,000 islands, is experiencing changing weather patterns and rising sea levels. That will affect the sustainability of our development and even our survival. Indonesia is therefore fully committed to the Paris Agreement. We call on all countries to implement their obligations under the Agreement.

One of the greatest challenges to our global order and development agenda is the threat of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. The threat is real, imminent and ever-present. Terrorism undermines peace and disrupts development. Therefore, my third point concerns the urgent need for global action and partnership in combating terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. The key to tackling terrorism is to address its root causes: extreme poverty, illiteracy and massive youth unemployment. In most cases, radicalism and terrorism take hold of young, angry men, who think they have no hope because their country is destroyed, in combination with authoritarian Governments and invasions of big countries.

In Indonesia, we have adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism in the form of a seamless combination of using hard and soft powers and strengthening law enforcement and the rule of law. At the same time, we are fostering engagement with communities through education, empowerment and interfaith and cultural dialogue. Indonesia has also implemented a comprehensive programme for the deradicalization and reintegration of those who have been radicalized or gone to the dark side. We have deradicalized more than 1,600 extremists in over 72 prisons in Indonesia. In this digital age of social media, terrorism is like cancer; it spreads quickly and it is deadly. No one country can address it in isolation. Global cooperation and a comprehensive approach are the only panacea to eradicate the threat.

As global challenges become more complex, it is evident that unilateralism is not a sustainable solution. The world needs strong partnership — a true global partnership. Indonesia has long believed in such partnership. That belief stems from our embedded national slogan "*Bersatu kita teguh bercerai kita runtuh*", which translates as "united we stand, divided we fall". Indonesia has always desired to contribute to global partnership, global peace and security, and global prosperity. Indonesia has presented its candidacy for non-permanent membership of the Security Council for the term 2019-2020. Indonesia is a true partner for world peace. We are counting on the support of those present for our candidacy.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Crown Prince Abdullah II: I am honoured today to speak on behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah II and the people of Jordan. I bring Jordan's sincere congratulations on the election of President Lajčák and our commitment to the work of the General Assembly. To Secretary-General Guterres, I extend my country's great appreciation for his partnership with our people.

Two years ago, I had the chance to advocate on behalf of my generation and to chair a delegation that participated in the work leading to the adoption of the first Security Council resolution on youth. Our joint efforts resulted in the historic, unanimous adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, aimed at empowering young people to participate in peace processes and dispute resolution.

Today, I stand before the Assembly not only as a representative of my beloved Jordan, but also as a member of the largest generation of young people in history. Like every other generation, we have inherited the collective wisdom and values of our elders. And like others before us, we must often struggle to

reconcile them with our reality today. What that reality is is unprecedented.

Ours is a world at an epic intersection, driven by the confluence of deepened globalization and disruptive technologies. We are at the brink of a fourth industrial revolution that is redefining how we function as societies and how we relate to one another as human beings. Our hyperconnected world is at once bringing people closer together and widening the divisions among them.

Amid all that, the young people of my generation are asking: what are the values that anchor global citizenship today? In which direction does our collective moral compass point, and can it guide us safely to justice, prosperity and peace for all? Too often, people of my generation are labelled dreamers, yet we all know that every great deed was born a dream. We are often dismissed as idealists, but idealism is not foolish; it is fearless. It invigorates us to lift our reality to the level of our higher ideals, and not to compromise our ideals in the face of adversity.

So I humbly ask those present to indulge me as I try, on behalf of my generation, to sharpen the contours of our foggy terrain and put forward some rudimentary questions that are unfettered by the political decorum that I know I will acquire with time. I will use my country, Jordan, as a launchpad for those thoughts and questions, as I believe they are a true embodiment of what is so right and yet so wrong with our world today.

Throughout its history, Jordan has suffered external shock after external shock, but the past couple of decades have been relentless. We are currently bordered by a number of conflicts. Over the years, there have been wars in Gaza, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, and there are worsening prospects for peace in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Jordan has also had to weather the global financial crisis and the energy crises.

All that has affected us in very real and felt ways. Our largest export market, Iraq, was completely shut off. Trade with Syria came to a halt, and we lost critical trade routes from Europe and Turkey. Despite our best efforts, regional instability has undermined tourism and investment. I do not know of any other country in recent history that has gone through such an onslaught of crises and found itself surrounded by so many conflicts through no fault of its own.

And it does not stop there. My country — a resource-poor nation in a conflict-rich region — is host to 1.3 million Syrian refugees, in addition to millions of Palestinian refugees and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, as well as others from Libya and Yemen. Jordan today is one of the largest hosts of refugees in the world. The direct cost of the Syria crisis now consumes more than a quarter of our budget. Its ripple effects are felt across local communities, where 90 per cent of Syrian refugees live. Housing, food, energy, health care, education and jobs are all under pressure.

Yet in the face of those daunting challenges, we did not back down from our ideals or values. We did not turn our backs on people in need. We are weighed down by massive debt, yet we stand tall and proud. Our soldiers dodge bullets to let refugees into our country, not to keep them out. Nor did we falter in our reform efforts, difficult as some of them have been on our people. On the contrary, the heavier our burden became, the more forcefully we forged ahead.

Please do not misunderstand me; we are not perfect. To bring down unemployment and create the jobs needed for youth and future generations, we need to drastically improve our investment climate; enhance integrity and accountability; advance our education system; and support young entrepreneurs. Ordinarily, assistance would be tied to our progress. But these are extraordinary times, and aid is a necessary runway if our political and economic reforms are to fully take off.

Difficult circumstances did not stop Jordan from being a net contributor to global good. We have remained steadfast in our commitment to a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the two-State solution, despite prevailing scepticism. We have staunchly upheld our duty as Hashemite custodians of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Preserving the historical and legal status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif is key to peace in our region and the world, as Jerusalem is the cradle of all three monotheistic religions.

We have been unwavering in the international war against terrorism and our promotion of the true values of Islam. Our peacekeeping troops have protected innocent civilians from Haiti to Darfur to East Timor; and our calls for inclusiveness and moderation ring loud in a region too often deafened by division and extremism. We have done the right thing, over and over again, because that is what real integrity means.

But how has the world reacted? No doubt, Jordan is regularly praised for its humanitarian and moral stance, and we are proud of our country's reputation. But kind words do not balance budgets, build schools or bolster employment. For the people and youth of Jordan, important questions linger. How can it be that a country as small as ours struggles in the face of such crushing adversity, only to be told that its friends are suffering from donor fatigue? Financial institutions often remind us that on a per capita basis, we are a top recipient of aid. Yet, on a per capita basis, few countries have endured as many external shocks or contributed to global peace and security as Jordan has.

How can it be that a country like Jordan offers a humble home to millions of desperate people, while richer countries around the world quibble over accepting thousands? What does it say about our common humanity when last year alone the world spent close to $1.7 trillion on arms, but fell short by less than $1.7 billion in fulfilling the United Nations appeal to support Syrian refugees and host communities in countries like Jordan? What does it say when trillions are spent waging wars in our region, but little to take our region to safer shores?

There are no good answers. The sad reality is that war economies are thriving to the benefit of a few, while real economies are suffering to the detriment of all. The message to the youth of Jordan and our region is loud and clear: there is no shortage of money for fighting evil, but the appetite for rewarding virtue is nearly non-existent; that the voice of those who defend and build is drowned out by those who attack and destroy. It just does not add up. So, what do we tell the people of Jordan? What does the international community tell our young majority? Do we tell them that the values we live by are of no value? That pragmatism beats principles? That complacency trumps compassion? Or that we should play it safe; turn our backs on people in need, because we cannot count on others to have our back?

The United Nations is our global conscience, but for too many in my country, and others around the world trying to do good, it sometimes feels like the world's conscience is on silent mode. It is time to break the silence and start finding answers. In doing so, we can unleash a global current that carries our common humanity to safer shores. Our commitment to peace, moderation and international cooperation is uncompromising. Water a thirsty fruit-bearing tree or continue to add fuel to a raging fire? The world has a choice to make.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the statement he just made.

Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): Next week, on 1 October, Tuvalu will mark the thirty-ninth anniversary of its independence. It gives me great pleasure, therefore, on behalf of the Government and people of Tuvalu, to thank the United Nations and all its membership for granting Tuvalu the recognition of full sovereignty in October 1978.

Twenty-two years later, on the eve of the twenty-first century in September 2000, Tuvalu was admitted as the 189th Member of the United Nations, with the rights of full participation as a member of the United Nations family. Our joining the United Nations is a journey of hope — hope in the noble values of this great body, the United Nations, and trust in its ability to assure humankind, including small and vulnerable countries like mine, peace, security and prosperity for our survival.

I record Tuvalu's sincere gratitude to the United Nations and its specialized agencies, development partners — especially our traditional partners in the Pacific, regional bodies of the Pacific — friends in Asia, India, South Korea, Japan, the Republic of China, the European Union and others, for all their support to my island nation of Tuvalu. We welcome the friendship and partnership of United Nations Members and other entities as we move forward.

Tuvalu applauds the theme of the seventy-second general debate, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". It captures the undeniable linkage between peace, security and sustainable development. It underscores that, without peace and security, our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not deliver a fair globalization for all. In short, without sustainable development, there will be no peace and no security.

I congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election to the presidency and on his vision of focusing on people during the seventy-second session. I also congratulate the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji, on his efforts and outstanding leadership on many fronts.

I want to express the deepest sympathy of Tuvalu, as a small and vulnerable island nation, to the people of the United States of America and the Caribbean islands who are suffering or have been affected by the destruction caused by the recent hurricanes and tropical cyclones in that region. These unfortunate events clearly show the magnitude and urgency of global work still required of the United Nations to better prepare, protect and save peoples and humanity from such calamities.

We also share the devastating grief of the people of Mexico, including young schoolchildren, following the earthquake this week, as well as other peoples suffering similar disasters and violence around the world. We pray that God brings comfort and a speedy recovery to the affected people and their loved ones.

Horrific acts of violence and terrorism continue to plague our world. Countless innocent lives are destroyed and lost. Violence in any form is a direct threat to peace and security and seriously undermines our efforts to achieve sustainable development. We therefore condemn violence and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations.

We are particularly concerned with the threat to global peace and security posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We acknowledge the persistent efforts of the Security Council to de-escalate tensions. A renewed engagement with inclusive diplomatic dialogue is, in our view, the only option for solving the crisis on the Korean peninsula. We believe that a military response would lead to unimaginable destruction and loss of life.

In this vein, Tuvalu maintains its commitments in support of all international legal instruments against violence and terrorism. It is critical that we support international law for the protection and promotion of human rights. We commend the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism to ensure the effective and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Just yesterday, and with pride on behalf of my country, Tuvalu, I signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a further demonstration of our commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and to the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty, which was negotiated and drafted at the 1984 Pacific Island Leaders Forum, held in Tuvalu. It is our fervent hope that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including the trade in materials and the development of technologies to produce such weapons, are totally banned, outlawed and prohibited worldwide by the United Nations. Humankind must be advanced neither on the principles of fear and deterrence nor on the adage of "might is right", but rather on moral justice for humankind, equity, trust, respect and the full enjoyment of basic human rights.

The entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change last year raised our hopes that, in recognizing the existential threat to us all, Member States would commit to the common cause of fighting climate change, adapting to its impacts and strengthening the ability of developing States, especially the most vulnerable, to deal with them. The Paris Agreement is our common hope of a decent life on a sustainable planet. For Tuvalu, it is our hope of security and survival.

This hope, however, dimmed with the announcement by the United States that it will abandon the Paris Agreement. This decision risks undermining our global efforts to save and protect the livelihoods of the people who are at risk from the impacts of climate change. These are the marginalized, the vulnerable, the poor, the women and the children who suffer the most from climate change, especially those who live on low-lying islands and incoastal areas. There are already tens of millions of these people, and their number is increasing at an alarming rate.

Domestic, economic and political interests are often short-term and benefit only a few. They should not be pursued at the expense of a decent life for us

all, current and future generations, on a sustainable planet. That is the spirit that underpins our twenty-first-century development system. We therefore urge the United States to reunite with us and to allow all of us, in particular the most vulnerable, the best possible chance to save ourselves and the sustainable future of humankind. We are nevertheless encouraged this morning by the strong leadership of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and French President Emmanuel Macron on climate change. We thank them and highly commend their courage.

We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to convene a dedicated climate summit in 2019 to mobilize political support. It will be an important opportunity, in our view, to review our progress and momentum and, most importantly, to enhance our commitment to taking urgent and credible actions to reverse global warming. We are also encouraged by the Secretary-General's commitment to intensifying high-level political engagement to limit the temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and aiming at limiting the increase to 1.5°C. We are likewise heartened by his dedication to rallying the United Nations system to better support Member States by mobilizing resources and strengthening partnerships in their pursuit of climate action.

Indeed, without enhanced commitment and genuine partnerships, the Paris Agreement will not save us all, especially the most vulnerable. Climate change is a risk multiplier on all factors of development. Its challenges are complex and continue to change. It is for this reason that we reiterate our call for the appointment of a special representative on climate change and security in order to enhance international focus, coordination and commitment. In the same vein, we call for climate change and security to be a permanent item on the agenda of the Security Council, given its direct threat to global peace and security.

For Tuvalu and many of the low-lying islands, our peace and security are not imperilled by traditional threats of conflict, violence, drugs, weapons, famine or disease. Instead, as the Male' Declaration on the Human Dimension of Climate Change recognized in 2007, "the impacts of climate change pose the most immediate, fundamental and far-reaching threat" to individuals and communities in these most vulnerable States and threaten a wide range of human rights, including

> "the right to life, the right to take part in cultural life, the right to use and enjoy property, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to food and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".

Ten years ago we recognized that climate change was the single greatest major threat to our peace, security and, ultimately, survival. It remains so today, and the situation grows more urgent every day. Under current warming trends, our islands may be submerged under the sea within the next 50 years. If and when that happens, we will be forced to abandon our islands, even though we contribute the least to global warming and sea-level rise. This forced relocation or displacement of our people is an injustice and an infringement on our fundamental and basic human rights.

It is for this very reason that we continue to call for enhanced global commitment and partnerships in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. We cannot give up on this campaign, for two very simple reasons. First, relocation and statelessness are totally unacceptable, as many of us here in the Hall would agree. Secondly, we all know that membership of our global family of the United Nations has the tools and resources to save Tuvalu and low-lying States from the impacts of climate change. It is only a question of whether we have the will and the courage to help these people.

We have come together to face grave risks before. Over many years, the international community, guided by the Charter of the United Nations, has cooperated on many fronts to deal with threats such as Ebola, cholera, violence, natural disasters and, subsequently, the lives and rights of people displaced by such threats. The international response was immediate because these threats were potential global threats to humankind. For others, however, their response was driven by political and economic interests. Sadly, displacement owing to the impacts of climate change has not drawn the same international concern and response, despite the fact that it has the very real potential to become a serious threat to global peace, security and human rights.

Uncontrolled mass migration into Europe as a result of conflicts and natural disasters, for example, has taught us the very important lesson that we should have had in place effective international institutions and systems to control, manage and protect the rights of migrants. In exactly the same manner, we must now formulate effective international systems to protect

the human rights of people displaced by the impacts of climate change and avoid further uncontrolled mass migration and mass violation of human rights.

This preparation must include developing the appropriate international legal tools to cope with the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. In particular, the current refugee regimes that were developed to cope with traditional threats do not adequately protect people forced to leave their homes by the impacts of climate change. We therefore reiterate our proposal for a United Nations resolution on the establishment of a legal process to protect the human rights and, ultimately, save the lives of people displaced by the impacts of climate change.

As a least developed country (LDC) and a small island developing State (SIDS), we need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges we face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On our own part, Tuvalu has developed its national strategy for sustainable development, known as Te Kakeega III, premised on building resilience through good governance, inclusive participation and capacity measures for mitigation for LDCs, with targets of 100 per cent renewable energy by 2020, as well as coastal protection adaptation on all islands, in order to protect and save Tuvalu.

We are grateful to the members of the international community for their generous support through the work of the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as through other donors and bilateral partners. While grateful for their goodwill, we have established our own Tuvalu Climate Change and Disaster Survival Fund as a facility to help people respond quickly to the impacts of climate change.

To enhance further adaptation work, access to appropriate infrastructures, maritime ports on the islands, airports, technology connectivity, health care, quality education and renewable energy are critical areas of particular priority. Tuvalu will welcome the development of genuine and durable partnerships, as aspired to under the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway.

In regard to the issue of LDC graduation, it is our view that a country must graduate only when it can achieve sustainable development, not merely when it should be able to achieve it. The unique vulnerability of SIDS and LDCs such as Tuvalu must be the central criteria of consideration for LDC graduation.

As small islands surrounded by vast oceans, we interact with the ocean every day of our lives. We are heavily dependent on the ocean, and the ocean is central to our achievement of sustainable development. We firmly believe that once we have established our baselines under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, these baselines, as well as the identified maritime zones, shall remain forever. This is irrespective of sea-level rise.

The ongoing discussions on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction must ensure that small island developing States, with our particular vulnerabilities, are provided the necessary financial and technical support to guarantee our equal and fair participation in the management and sharing of benefits from this instrument. We must agree at this session of the Assembly to commence work on developing a legally binding agreement to give protection to biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions.

Our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is universal and holistic in that it applies to all countries and actors and covers all aspects of sustainable development. Critically to its success, the agenda is rooted in human rights and genuine partnerships. But the vibrant democracy of Taiwan, which has long been an active and responsible development partner to many countries, including Tuvalu, is being denied participation in the United Nations system. It cannot be right that the twenty-second-largest global economy, with a notable capacity to contribute, cannot effectively participate in our 2030 Agenda. This is unfortunate, given that our 2030 Agenda needs genuine global partnerships to mobilize all available resources to be successful. Under its principle of universality, the United Nations should allow the 23 million people of Taiwan to enjoy their fundamental right to participate fully in the United Nations system and to benefit and contribute effectively to its programmes.

In the same vein, the people of Cuba must be allowed to freely exercise their rights to determine their own political, economic and social systems. With their rights and trade restricted by the unilateral blockade imposed by the United States, the people of Cuba are denied effective participation in our Sustainable Development Goals programmes.

Of similar concerns, the people of West Papua should be enabled to exercise their fundamental right, with the intervention of this responsible Organization, to determine their own development aspirations and future. The West Papuans are a distinct people with Pacific roots, with their own land, history and culture. The violation of human rights in West Papua is a matter of constant and great concern to us. Tuvalu strongly believes that the United Nations must engage in setting a clear pathway to address these issues and the issue of self-determination for the people of West Papua.

We must embrace the genuine partnership of those who can contribute to the realization of a decent life in our marginalized communities. We cannot ignore and risk leaving behind those who hope for a decent life but are being constrained by violence, natural disasters, violation of human rights, atrocities and the impacts of climate change. We cannot leave anyone behind.

Finally, I wish to express Tuvalu's strong support for a global pact on the environment, as initiated and proposed by France. We need an internationally legally binding agreement that protects our rights to a safe and clean environment. We are but on one big canoe for humankind and, as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said this morning (see A/72/PV.12), no one country has the right to jump ship on climate change. We must either paddle together to keep the canoe afloat and safe, or allow the canoe to sink and drown. It is our hope that, with this global pact on the environment and the Paris Agreement, we can save Tuvalu. If we can save Tuvalu, we can save the world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Tuvalu for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.